

DEPARTMENTAL REGULATION		NUMBER: 1042-149
SUBJECT: RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEES FOR THE SOUTHERN REGION	DATE: September 24, 2003	
	OPI: Forest Service	

1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

- a This regulation establishes 16 Resource Advisory Committees (RACs) for the Southern Region. The purpose of the RACs is to improve collaborative relationships and to provide advice and recommendations to the Forest Service consistent with the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (Pub. L. No. 106-393) (the Act), which governs the RACs and the charter.
- b The RACs for the Southern Region are as follows:
 - (1) Davy Crockett National Forest RAC in Texas, working with Houston and Trinity Counties;
 - (2) Sam Houston National Forest RAC in Texas, working with Walker, Montgomery, and San Jacinto Counties;
 - (3) Sabine-Angelina National Forests RAC in Texas, working with Shelby, Nacogdoches, Angelina, San Augustine, and Sabine Counties;
 - (4) Ozark-Ouachita National Forests RAC in Oklahoma and Arkansas, working with Le Flore and McCurtain Counties in Oklahoma; and Washington, Madison, Newton, Searcy, Baxter, Stone, Crawford, Franklin, Johnson, Pope, Van Buren, Sebastian, Logan, Yell, Perry, Polk, Montgomery, Garland, Scott, and Saline Counties in Arkansas;
 - (5) Kistachie National Forest RAC in Louisiana, working with Claiborne, Natchitoches, Winn, Grant, Vernon, and Rapides Parishes;

- (6) Holly Springs-Tombigbee National Forests RAC in north Mississippi, working with Marshall, Benton, Tippah, Lafayette, Union, Pontotoc, Yalobusha, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Oktibbeha, Winston, and Noxubee Counties;
- (7) Delta-Bienville National Forest RAC in central Mississippi, working with Sharkey, Scott, Newton, Smith, and Jasper Counties;
- (8) Southwest Mississippi RAC in south Mississippi, working with Jefferson, Copiah, Adams, Franklin, Lincoln, Wilkinson, Amite, Lawrence, and Pike Counties;
- (9) DeSoto RAC in Mississippi working with Forrest, George, Greene, Harrison, Jackson, Jones, Pearl River, Perry, Stone, and Wayne Counties;
- (10) Bankhead National Forest RAC in northwest Alabama, working with Lawrence and Winston Counties;
- (11) Talledega National Forest RAC in northeast Alabama, working with Calhoun, Cleburne, Talledega, and Clay Counties;
- (12) Oconee National Forest RAC in Georgia, working with Oglethorpe, Greene, Jasper, Putnam, and Jones Counties;
- (13) Apalachicola National Forest RAC in Florida, working with Liberty, Leon, Wakulla, and Franklin Counties;
- (14) Osceola National Forest RAC in Florida, working with Columbia and Baker Counties;
- (15) Ocala National Forest RAC in Florida, working with Putnam, Marion, and Lake Counties; and
- (16) Francis Marion-Sumter National Forests in South Carolina, working with Oconee, Abbeville, Laurens, Union, Chester, Greenwood, Newberry, Saluda, McCormick, Edgefield, Berkeley and Charleston Counties.

2 SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

- a The functions of the RACs cannot be completed in less than 2 years. In accordance with Departmental regulations, unless renewed, the committee will terminate 2 years from the date of filing the charter.

- b Projects recommended to the Secretary of Agriculture must be approved by a majority of the members of each of the three membership categories.

3 OFFICERS AND MEMBERSHIP

- a Each RAC shall consist of 15 members appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture. Committee members shall be representative of the interests of the following three categories:

- (1) Five persons who—

- (a) Represent organized labor;
- (b) Represent developed outdoor recreation, off-highway vehicle users, or commercial recreation activities;
- (c) Represent energy and mineral development interests;
- (d) Represent the commercial timber industry; or
- (e) Hold Federal grazing permits or other land use permit within the area for which the committee is organized.

- (2) Five persons representing—

- (a) Nationally recognized environmental organizations;
- (b) Regionally or locally recognized environmental organizations;
- (c) Dispersed recreational activities;
- (d) Archaeological and historical interests; or
- (e) Nationally or regionally recognized wild horse and burro interest groups.

- (3) Five persons who—

- (a) Hold State-elected office or their designee;
- (b) Hold county- or local-elected office;
- (c) Represent American Indian tribes within or adjacent to the area for which the committee is organized;

- (d) Are school officials or teachers; or
 - (e) Represent the affected public-at-large.
- b The Secretary shall appoint one replacement for each membership category.
- c RAC members shall serve 3-year terms.
- d The Chairperson of each RAC shall be elected by the RAC from among its members for a term of 1 year.
- e The Secretary of Agriculture shall appoint a designated Federal officer (DFO) under sections 10(e) and (f) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, 5 U.S.C., app., for each RAC.
- f Equal opportunity practices, in line with USDA policies, shall be followed in all membership appointments to the committee. To ensure that the recommendations of the committee have taken into account the needs of the diverse groups served by the Department, membership shall include, to the extent practicable, individuals with demonstrated ability to represent minorities, women, and persons with disabilities.
- g If a RAC member fails to attend (in person or by telephonic or electronic means) two consecutive official meetings, the Secretary may remove that member from the RAC.
- h If a vacancy occurs on a RAC, the replacement, if available, shall fill the vacancy as soon as practicable. If the replacement is not available, a new member shall be appointed to the vacancy in the same manner as the original appointment. A replacement or a new member who fills a vacancy occurring before the expiration of the term for which his/her predecessor was appointed shall be appointed for the remainder of the term.
- i Membership shall be a balanced and broad representation from within each of the three membership categories.
- j Members shall reside within the State or States in which the RAC has jurisdiction. To the extent practicable, each of the three categories shall be composed of local representatives.

4 DUTIES

- a Each RAC shall review projects proposed under Title II of the Act by participating counties and other persons.
- b Each RAC shall propose projects and funding to the Secretary of Agriculture under section 203 of the Act.
- c Each RAC shall provide early and continuous coordination with appropriate Forest Service officials in recommending projects consistent with Title II of the Act.
- d Each RAC shall provide frequent opportunities for citizens, organizations, tribes, land management agencies, and other interested parties to participate openly and meaningfully, beginning at the early stages of the project development process under Title II of the Act.
- e Each RAC may create and operate subcommittees recommended by a majority of the committee members and approved by the Secretary or the DFO.
- f Consistent with applicable laws and Department regulations, each RAC may adopt such by-laws or rules of operation as it deems advisable.

5 ESTIMATED ANNUAL OPERATING COSTS

- a Members of the Committee serve without compensation. Reimbursement for travel and per diem for attendance at RAC meetings called by the Chairperson and with an agenda approved by the DFO will be determined on a forest-by-forest basis with a view to budgetary constraints and the need to achieve adequate representation of necessary groups.
- b Annual operating costs are estimated to range from \$30,000 to \$60,000 and 0.3 to 0.6 staff years of support per committee.

6 NUMBER AND FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

- a The RACs will meet as often as is necessary to complete their business.

- b A majority of the members of the RAC must be present to constitute an official meeting of the committee.
- c The approval of a majority of the members of each of the three membership categories of the RAC shall be required to approve a project for recommendation to the Secretary.

7 REPORTS/SUPPORT

- a The RACs report to the Secretary of Agriculture through the appropriate forest supervisor.
- b Support for the RACs shall be provided by the Forest Service.

8 INTERPRETATION

For guidance as to its duties, the RAC should consult the Act (copy attached). In the event the RAC is uncertain with regard to its duties or procedures, it should consult the appropriate forest supervisor. The Secretary shall resolve ambiguities using first, the law, and then any relevant legislative history.

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